



An update from your Congresswoman

Mazie K. Hirono

Aloha,

Addressing the need to create jobs and resolving the Federal budget are among my highest legislative priorities. However, I would like to take this time to reflect on the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan and left its mark on Hawaii.

Born in Fukushima, Japan and having spent my childhood there, I watched with horror the newsclips showing the black water rushing inland—destroying everything and everyone in its path. We are reminded of the fragility of life and our island homes, whether in Asia or the Pacific.

My gratitude to all who expressed concern for my relatives; thankfully, they are safe. Mahalo to the individuals, families, and organizations that were galvanized into action to help the Japanese. I joined many Hawaii residents in signing a book of condolence at the Japanese Consulate of Hawaii to express my sympathy directly to the Japanese people.

The tsunami also affected Hawaii and most notably, Maui County and Kona. While we are grateful that Hawaii did not experience any loss of life, it is a struggle for small business owners and homeowners to clean up and rebuild. I hope that with assistance from the SBA and a presidential declaration, financial help will be on its way.

In my visit to Kona, I was impressed by the strength and resilience of the people and their enthusiastic commitment to rebuilding their community. The Aloha Spirit thrives in Kona!

The challenges ahead for our nation and our state are many. I support you and your family and will continue to listen and respond to your needs by concentrating on initiatives that will make a difference. I look forward to working with you as we build a future full of aloha.

Mazie K. Hirono

Ongoing Recovery Efforts in Kona

Tsunami surges following the March 11 earthquake in Japan spread damage throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The damage was most severe in the Kailua-Kona area, with Hawaii Island experiencing a total of \$18.3 million in damage to public infrastructure, business, and homes.

Congresswoman Hirono visited Kailua-Kona to gain first-hand knowledge of the tsunami's impact on the community and to hear from business owners and residents directly. She began her visit at the King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel and walked along Alii Drive to meet with business owners such as Cindy Coats of Cindy Coats Art Gallery, whose business had been devastated by the tsunami. At Hulihee Palace, Congresswoman Hirono toured the damaged areas with Palace administrator Fanny Au Hoy. She also visited the Four Seasons Hotel and Kona Village Resort, which each endured major water damage.

Congresswoman Hirono's staff assisted and provided information to affected homeowners and business owners who attended the Kona Disaster Assistance Recovery Center on March 29-30. Financial assistance is available through



Palace administrator Fanny Au Hoy describes the tsunami damage to Hulihee Palace to Congresswoman Hirono.

the Small Business Administration (SBA), which offers disaster loans to residents on Hawaii Island, Maui, and Molokai who suffered damage due to the tsunami. On April 8, 2011, President Obama issued a disaster declaration for the State of Hawaii, providing federal disaster aid to the state's recovery efforts. For more information on SBA loans, grants, and other federal assistance, please visit www.hirono.house.gov.

If you continue to experience trouble while applying for or receiving federal financial assistance to rebuild or repair your property, please contact Congresswoman Hirono's Hawaii Office.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Visits

As a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Congresswoman Hirono accompanied U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood as he met with local officials to gain further insight about air, land, and water transportation issues in Hawaii.

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Senator Akaka and Congresswoman Hirono introduced identical companion bills.

Reintroduction of the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2011

On March 30, 2011, U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka introduced the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2011 (S.675). Congresswoman Hirono introduced an identical companion bill (**H.R. 1250**) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The House bill has now been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Unfortunately, many in the new House Majority do not support Native Hawaiian issues. Congresswoman Hirono will continue to reach out to her colleagues who are unfamiliar with Hawaii's history and unaware that Native Hawaiians had their own sovereign nation, with their own language, culture, religion, and traditional economy.

The bill extends to Native Hawaiians the opportunity to build a government-to-government relationship with the United States. This version of the bill has the support of the Obama administration and closely parallels existing federal Indian law.

Medicaid for Compact Migrants

Citizens from Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau are allowed to freely enter the United States under the Compacts of Free Association. In 1996, a change to federal law put an end to federal Medicaid coverage for Compact Migrants. As a result, state and territorial governments have been the sole funding sources of their social service and public health needs.

In 2007, Hawaii spent over \$37 million to cover the health care costs of the state's Compact Migrant population. Of this amount, \$30 million would have been eligible for partial federal reimbursement through Medicaid.

To reinstate federal Medicaid funds for Compact Migrants, Congresswoman Hirono introduced the **Medicaid Coverage for Citizens of Freely Associated States Act of 2011 (H.R. 1035)**.

"The decision to allow citizens of the Freely Associated States to come to the United States was a federal decision; however, the cost of that decision has fallen mainly on a handful of states and territories. Restoring Medicaid coverage is the only fair way to address the federal mandate."

—CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO

Supporting our Wounded Service Members and Veterans



Courtesy of Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs

Congresswoman Hirono recently introduced the **K-9 Companion Corps Act (HR 943)**, which would establish a federal grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by service members and veterans.

Assistance dogs help tens of thousands of soldiers and veterans struggling to cope with physical or mental health disabilities by:

- Assisting with mobility and balance
- Retrieving and carrying objects
- Getting help
- Providing social interaction and companionship
- Helping soldiers handle Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder by elevating their mood, building confidence, and reducing stress



In mid-February, Congresswoman Hirono held the first of several planned listening sessions with different groups of Hawaii teachers. These 31 Teach for America teachers from Hawaii were in Washington, D.C. as part of the three-day national **Teach for America 20th Anniversary Summit**. The goal of the meeting was to gather input on how to best improve teacher effectiveness, the most significant in-school factor for boosting student achievement. The 31 teachers represent various schools across Congresswoman Hirono's district, including: Kealahou High School, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School, Solomon Elementary School, Waianae Intermediate School, Waianae High School, and Wheeler Middle School.

The Young-Hirono Amendment:

- Restores federal funding eligibility of Native Hawaiian and Alaska Native education programs.
- Promotes innovative projects that enhance educational services available to Native Hawaiian children, young adults, and educators.
- Supports a possible \$34 million federal funding for the Native Hawaiian Education Program.

Fighting for Education in Our District Young-Hirono Amendment

HR 1, the GOP Continuing Resolution, sought to cut billions of dollars from our federal budget, including funding for the Native Hawaiian Education Program. To fight these spending cuts, Congresswoman Hirono joined her colleague Congressman Don Young

(R-Alaska) to save the Native Hawaiian Education Act and the Alaska Native Education Equity Act. Their cooperation resulted in the Young-Hirono Amendment (#532), one of the few bipartisan amendments passed by the House.

"Working across the aisle, Representative Young and I were able to join forces to counteract those who strongly oppose any programs benefiting Native Hawaiians or Alaska Natives. Although we differ in many of our political views, we share a commitment to fairness for the indigenous, aboriginal people of what is now the United States." —CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

The subjects of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are vital to the education and future success of Hawaii's youth. Congresswoman Hirono introduced two bills (HR 288, HR 289) that improve student access to STEM education.

STEM Education Teacher Tax Incentive Act of 2011:

- Provides an annual \$1,000 tax credit for STEM teachers to encourage those who major in STEM fields to join and remain in the teaching profession.
- Defines STEM teachers at high-need schools as eligible for a tax credit of up to \$1,500 to help repay undergraduate tuition.

Renewable Energy Partnerships Act:

- Creates a two year U.S. Department of Energy pilot program to provide grants of up to \$1 million for partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
- Offers grants that can be used to train teachers and create renewable energy instructional programs.



"I have visited dozens of schools and STEM teachers who work day in, day out to inspire our next generation of leaders. These teachers engage their students through innovative programs such as Waianae High School's Searider Productions and various robotics programs throughout the state where students compete successfully across our islands, nationally, and internationally."

—CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO



Congresswoman Hirono discussed possible innovations resulting from SBIR funding with Vice President David Kane of **Trex Advanced Materials**, Kauai Operations. Trex Advanced Materials received a 2011 Tibbetts Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Working for Small Business, Innovation, and Technology

Small businesses throughout our state and nation are fully capable leaders in innovation and technology. In support of small business, Congresswoman Hirono introduced three bills to strengthen the existing **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program** and the **Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program**.

SBIR funds the startup and development stages and encourages commercialization. STTR has a similar goal, but is designed to fund public/private collaborations between non-profit research institutions and small businesses that want to develop commercial applications for technologies developed by those institutions.

SBIR Enhancement Act, HR 447:

- Raises the allocation of federal funding from 2.5% to 5%.
- Raises the award amount to \$200,000 in Phase I and to \$1.5 million in Phase II.

STTR Enhancement Act, HR 449:

- Raises the allocation of federal funding from 0.3% to 0.6%.
- Raises the award amount to \$200,000 in Phase I and to \$1.5 million in Phase II.

Small Business Innovation Enhancement Act, HR 448:

- Includes both SBIR and STTR Enhancement Acts.

"Small companies are a source of great innovative talent. However, too many great ideas never come to fruition because small entrepreneurial firms lack the resources they need to test an idea and bring it to life." —CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO

Ensuring Hawaii Gets its Fair Share

Congresswoman Mazie K. Hirono successfully advanced an amendment to H.R. 658, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011, that changes federal law to ensure that Hawaii gets its full allotment of yearly Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funds.

Current federal law exempts Hawaii's airports from charging passenger facility fees (PFCs) to passengers on interisland flights. Unfortunately, airports that charge these fees must give up 50 to 75 percent of their annual AIP funds.

However, Hawaii collects PFCs on far less than 100 percent of the passengers that use our airports. This puts the state at a disadvantage under the current FAA funding formula. Congresswoman Hirono's amendment adjusts the formula to include this discrepancy. This will result in approximately \$6 million of additional federal funds to improve airports statewide.



Protecting Workers in Our District

Upholding Davis-Bacon Wage Protections

In an affront to workers, Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) offered an amendment to H.R. 1 to eliminate Davis-Bacon wage protections from federal construction contracts. Fortunately, out of the nearly 400 job-killing Republican-offered amendments, it was one of the few to be defeated. Congresswoman Hirono spoke against this amendment on the House floor:

"Opponents who claim the government could save billions by eliminating Davis-Bacon protections ignore productivity, safety and the act's economic development benefits, which contribute to the real cost effectiveness of Davis-Bacon."

—CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO

Caring for Flight Attendant Safety

Over the past several years, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) studies have shown that fatigue affects the performance of pilots and flight attendants. Congress has passed legislation to ensure pilots are not overly fatigued, but currently there are no rules ensuring that flight attendants have adequate rest.

Congresswoman Hirono offered an amendment to the FAA Reauthorization bill to require that flight attendants be treated the same as pilots. Congresswoman Hirono also offered an amendment to extend OSHA protections to flight attendants. Although these amendments were not adopted, the Congresswoman will continue to work on behalf of flight attendants.

Helpful Hints Handout—Spring 2011

In these challenging economic times, we all need a helping hand. This insert contains a few handy tips to get through the spring, including tax and foreclosure assistance. I want to hear from you. Please contact my Hawaii Office or Washington, D.C. Office if you have any questions or comments regarding legislative issues or are experiencing problems with a federal agency. Mahalo! —CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE HIRONO

Post-Tsunami Recovery Assistance through SBA

Business Assistance:

- **Business Physical Disaster Loans** can provide a non-profit or business of any size with up to \$2 million to repair or replace real property, machinery, equipment, fixtures, inventory, and leasehold improvements. In addition, disaster loans to repair or replace real property or leasehold improvements may be increased by as much as 20% of the verified loss to protect the damaged property against possible future disasters of the same type.
- **The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL)** can provide up to \$2 million of financial assistance to small businesses or private, non-profit organizations that suffer substantial economic injury as a result of the declared disaster, regardless of whether the applicant sustained physical damage.

Congresswoman Hirono's staff serves Kona homeowners and business owners at the Disaster Assistance Recovery Center.

Individual Assistance:

- Homeowners, renters, and personal property owners may be eligible for up to \$40,000 to repair or replace clothing, furniture, cars, appliances and other items.
- Homeowners may apply for up to \$200,000 to repair or replace their primary residence. Loans may be increased up to 20% of the total amount of disaster damage to real estate to make improvements that lessen the risk of future disasters.
- Interest rates for these loans range between 4% and 8% depending on the borrower's access to credit.



Sage PLUS - Health Insurance Assistance

Sage PLUS is Hawaii's State Health Insurance Assistance Program offering free, one-to-one counseling and assistance to Medicare recipients and their families. Sage PLUS offers:

- Counseling to individuals, families, and caregivers on the options and benefits available under Medicare.
- Assistance in comparing and enrolling in most Medicare health and drug plans.

To reach a certified Sage PLUS counselor, please call toll-free at **1-888-875-9229**.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

SBDC provides free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and a variety of workshops, seminars, and online training. Counseling centers are located on Hawaii Island, Kauai, Maui and Oahu. Visit www.hawaii-sbdc.org to find a site near you.

Taxpayer Advocate Service

The Taxpayer Advocate Service offers free, confidential tax assistance to individuals and business taxpayers unable to resolve their problems with the IRS.

1099 Alakea St., Floor 22, Honolulu, HI 96813 • Tel: 566-2986

How Congresswoman Mazie Hirono Can Help YOU

Help with Federal Grants

Whether you're a member of a non-profit, local government, commercial organization, or an individual, federal funding can help you. Congresswoman Hirono offers a monthly Federal Grants Newsletter with a comprehensive listing of current federal funds.

Please visit www.hirono.house.gov to sign up for the newsletter. More resources and information for the beginning grant writer can be found on the website.

Constituent Services

At times, the federal government can be a daunting bureaucracy to those who need its help or have a problem that needs solving. Fortunately, Congresswoman Hirono and her staff are dedicated to answering your questions about federal agencies and their policies and procedures, and inquiring about the status of your case.

Please visit www.hirono.house.gov to learn more about how Congresswoman Hirono can help.

Contact Congresswoman Hirono:

Washington D.C. Office

1410 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
Tel: (202) 225-4906

Hawaii Office

5104 Prince Kuhio Federal Bldg.
300 Ala Moana Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96850

Tel:

Oahu:	541-1986	Lanai:	565-7199
Hawaii:	935-3756	Molokai:	522-0160
Maui:	242-1818	Kauai/Niihau:	245-1951

Foreclosure Assistance Across Our State



Congresswoman Hirono helped Dela Marie Barino and her husband Terry Martinez of South Maui Motors successfully avoid foreclosure.

The Housing Opportunity and Mortgage Equity (HOME) Act

Congresswoman Hirono co-sponsored the HOME Act, which intends to end the foreclosure crisis by offering affordable refinancing opportunities to millions of Americans with mortgages backed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Under this act, all mortgages currently owned or guaranteed by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that meet the basic criteria will qualify for the opportunity to refinance at historically low market rates. This would allow homeowners to reduce their monthly mortgage payment by hundreds of dollars—reducing the number of defaults and preventing foreclosure.

The fees for refinancing would be rolled into the mortgage to eliminate the cost to taxpayers and penalties would be waived.

You should never have to pay for **Foreclosure Prevention Services**. The Department of Housing and Urban Development suggests reputable foreclosure assistance organizations.



Congresswoman Hirono met with veterans at the Wahiawa Veterans event.

HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agencies

Hawaii HomeOwnership Center

1259 Aala Street, Suite 201
Honolulu, HI 96817
Tel: 523-9500
Toll-free: 877-523-9503

Self-Help Housing Corporation of Hawaii

1427 Dillingham Blvd., Suite 305
Honolulu, HI 96817
Tel: 808-842-7111

Hale Mahaolu

200 Hina Avenue
Kahului, HI 96732-1821
Tel: 808-661-5957

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

1050 Queen St., Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tel: 808-596-8155
Toll-free: 800-709-2642

Hawaiian Community Assets

1050 Queen St., Suite 201
Honolulu, HI 96814
Tel: 808-587-7886
Toll-free: 866-400-1116

Legal Aid Society of Hawaii

Locations available statewide.
Toll-free: 800-499-4302

Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Hawaii

Consumer Credit Counseling Services may be able to help you contact your creditors/lenders if:

- If you are struggling with your mortgage
- Considering bankruptcy
- Have debt totaling over \$10,000
- Are delinquent or on the verge of becoming delinquent

For more information visit <http://cccofhawaii.org>

Email info@cccofhawaii.org

Or visit a location near you:

Oahu:

1164 Bishop St., Suite 1614
Honolulu, HI 96813
Tel: (808) 532-3225
Toll-free: 1 (800) 801-5999
Fax: (808) 532-5611

Maui, Molokai & Lanai:

J. Walter Cameron Center
95 Mahalani St., Suite 6
Wailuku, HI 96793
Tel: (808) 242-8399
Fax: (808) 532-5611

Hawaii Island & Kauai:

632 Kinoole Street
Hilo, HI 96720
Tel: (808) 969-7136
Fax: (808) 532-5611

VA National Caregiver Support Line

M-F 8am-11pm and Sat. 10:30am-6pm EST

Toll-free number: **1-855-260-3274**

- Serves as a resource/referral center for those seeking Veteran caregiver information
- Provides information on the new benefits associated with the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010.

For more information, visit the VA's updated caregiver website: www.caregiver.va.gov.

Find Veterans benefits online at eBenefits

To learn more about your Veterans benefits, consider registering for an eBenefits account online at www.ebenefits.va.gov.

If you need assistance, call the VA Help line **1-800-827-1000**.

Congratulations to High-Achieving Youth in Our District



Courtesy of Nanakuli Performing Arts Center

Nanakuli Performing Arts Center

The **Nanakuli Performing Arts Center (NPAC)** offers Nanakuli High & Intermediate students the opportunity to be creative through its after-school performing arts program led by coordinator Robin Kitsu.

This August, ten NPAC students and eight alumni will join 62 U.S. high schools selected to participate in the Fringe Festival's American High School Theatre Festival. Students will perform "Mai Hookaawale: The Separating Sickness" to share the experiences of Hansen's disease patients on Kalaupapa. The Fringe Festival is the world's largest arts festival, held annually in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Hawaii Academic Decathlon

Hilo High School won the Hawaii Academic Decathlon State Finals and is now eligible to participate in the U.S. Academic Decathlon National Competition held in Charlotte, North Carolina from April 27-30. This year, the competition theme is the Great Depression.

The U.S. Academic Decathlon is a team competition where students participate in the categories of: art, music, language and literature, social science, speech, essay, economics, mathematics, science, and interview.



Courtesy of Hilo High School



Youth Corps programs have helped 600,000 youth nationwide gain education and job training skills. Mari Takemoto-Chock, Hilo, was named a 2011 Youth Corps Member of the Year. Congresswoman Hirono was awarded the 2011 Congressional Champion Award by the Corps Network. She is the lead sponsor of the Youth Corps Act to strengthen funding for these programs nationwide.

Maui High wins State Science Bowl, heads to Nationals

Maui High School won first place at the 18th annual Hawaii Science Bowl and will represent Hawaii in the National Science Bowl competition in Chevy Chase, MD, this April. Retired teacher Ed Ginoza coached the winning team of seniors Michael Flynn, Dane Oshiro, Ross Ito, sophomore Zachary Hill, and freshman alternate Trent Hori. Maui High School's science department was awarded \$500 and the team received an all-expense-paid trip to Maryland and team jackets.

Academy Offer of Appointment:

U.S. Air Force Academy

Jacob Butters (Kailua, Oahu), Iolani School; **Geoffrey Whitener** (Kailua-Kona, Hawaii Island), Kealakehe High School; **Evan Matsuyama** (Honaunau) Kealakehe High School

U.S. Military Academy at West Point

Jacob Butters (Kailua, Oahu), Iolani School; **Rey Molina** (Kihei, Maui), Maui High School; **Mitchell Richmond** (Kailua, Oahu), Punahou School; **Solomon Wechsler** (Kailua, Oahu), Iolani School

U.S. Naval Academy

Alec Geilfuss (Kailua, Oahu), Punahou School; **Zachary Mossman** (Kailua, Oahu), Home School; **Dane Oshiro** (Kula, Maui), Maui High School

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

Katrina Dreier (Lihue, Kauai) Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama

Mahalo to teachers like **Colonel Malaki**, Kealakehe High School, who encourage students to seek out opportunities to serve in U.S. Military Academies.

Kaha Kii Congressional Art Competition

In partnership with Youth Art Month, the Congressional Art Competition provides a venue for students in Congresswoman Hirono's district to showcase their artwork and be recognized for their artistic talents.

In 1st place, "Fish" by **Brennan Leong**, Leilehua, will be on display at the Capitol in Washington, D.C. "Looking Glass" by **Veronica Vestal**, Leilehua, our


2nd place winner, will be on display in Congresswoman Hirono's D.C. Office.

In 3rd place, "Ahukuni" by **Brennan Wortman**, Island School, will be displayed in Congresswoman Hirono's Hawaii Office.

Mahalo to our judges **Alison Ibara-Kawabe**, **Lori Uyehara**, and **Vince Hazen**; and Youth Art Month coordinator, Hawaii Art Education Association President, and Leilehua High art teacher **Larry Taguba**.

Leilehua High School Art Teacher Keith Sasada and Congressional Art Competition winner, Brennan Leong, stand in front of his first place work of art.



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www.hirono.house.gov



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112TH CONGRESS, SPRING 2011

AN UPDATE FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN MAZIE K. HIRONO



In recognition of **Black History Month** (February) and **Women's History Month** (March), Congresswoman Hirono donated books to high schools in the 2nd Congressional District. School libraries received copies of "Black Americans in Congress: 1870-2007" and "Women in Congress: 1917-2006."

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Visits

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Secretary LaHood committed to several key projects throughout our islands. He offered his support for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project and expressed his commitment to improving the condition of harbors statewide.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced that it will allow firms to compete for a subsidy to provide service to the residents of Kalaupapa under the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. The EAS program was established by Congress to ensure that rural communities like Kalaupapa have access to our national air transportation network. The subsidy offered by DOT has the potential to reduce current airfares by more than 60 percent.



Congresswoman Hirono and Gov. Abercrombie show Sec. LaHood the progress on Honolulu Harbor federally funded by a TIGER Discretionary Grant.